









The American Conservative

In dealing with real evils and threats such as  those once represented by  the Soviet Union, China, and their allies, we have won  not by waging preemptive war  for "regime change" but by deterring opponents  from aggression and relying on outliving them,  proving the superiority of  our own system, and ultimately  inducing peaceful change.

That is the real American way. 

PAUL W. SCHROEDER, The Case
Against Preemptive War ■ SEE PAGE 8





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CONSERVATIVE NEWS AND INFORMATION

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KAHANE AT THE STANDARD?

While *Weekly Standard* writers are often wrongheaded, we had not thought they endorsed the policies of the Israeli far right. By that we don't mean the Right exemplified by Netanyahu and Sharon (whose policies the *Standard* regularly touts) but the Right of the late Meir Kahane (whose Kach party was banned in Israel for racist hatermongering) and Baruch Goldstein, the Brooklyn born settler who went on a murderous rampage against Arab worshipers at a mosque in Hebron.

But David Gelernter's recent piece, "The Roots of European Appeasement" made us wonder. It contains an argument for an analogy between Israel and Poland (both are long submerged nations) that serves as a stalking horse for the notion that Palestinian Arabs should be ethnically cleansed from Palestine, as Kahane long advocated. Gelernter notes approvingly the removal of ethnic Germans that followed the moving of Poland's border westward after World War II. Germany took them in willingly, he writes. (In fact, postwar Germany didn't have much to say in the matter.) Similarly, Palestinian refugees from "Judea" can find a new home in Arabia. Left unspoken is the threat that they should just forget about leading free and decent lives where their ancestors did, in Palestine.

We read Gelernter's discursive essay as implying that the Palestinians deserve the same fate as the Germans after World War II, to be moved around at whim by the victorious military power (Israel, in this case). We doubt Israel will find much long term security by ethnically cleansing three million Arabs from the West Bank, and we find the analogy between the



MICHAEL CARROLL/ARTVILLE

Arab world and defeated Nazi Germany a tortured one. We do know advocates of ethnic cleansing exist on the fringes of the Sharon government, and amongst the most bellicose Jewish West Bank settlers. We hadn't seen them before in the *Standard*, and if this is indeed the balloon Gelernter is floating, it is an ominous sign.

[EUROPE]

GERMANY TURNS LEFT

On September 22nd, Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder and his "Red-Green coalition" of the Social Democratic and Green Parties narrowly won a second term in the German national elections. Until recently, polls had shown Schroeder's party running behind the center-right Christian Democrat opposition, led by Edmund Stoiber. Then President Bush ramped up the war rhetoric. Schroeder capitalized by running hard against German involvement in any Washington instigated anti-Iraq war, while some in his entourage wheeled out the kind of anti-American language not heard since the heyday of the Baader-Meinhof gang. (Stoiber also opposed the war, but more temperately.)

The Iraq war issue seemed to tip the balance. President Bush thus helped turn back Germany's best hope in

some time for free market economic policies and immigration reform. In a wider sense, his march towards war may have stalled the much-remarked rightward shift observed in many European elections, including those of Austria, Italy, the Netherlands, Denmark, Portugal, and France. The president's war policy may turn out to be the European Left's most potent organizing tool since Willi Munzenberg.

[LAW]

FILING FOR DOLLARS GETS EASIER?

The federal Alien Tort Claims Act of 1789 is a favorite of lawyers seeking cosmic justice and big paydays. Its purpose is forgotten: to give foreign victims of piracy a cause of action against pirates found in the United States. ATCA suits abound, accusing corporations of oppressing unhappy subjects of unpopular despots by investing in their countries. Tortmeister Ed Fagan's apartheid reparations suit, covered in our last issue, is one.

The Ninth Circuit, our most liberal (and overturned) federal appeals court, acted last month to help lawyers extract settlements from companies doing business abroad. Unocal invested in a natural gas project in Myanmar (Burma) and was sued in Los Angeles for "aiding and abetting" Burmese soldiers' abuse of Burmese villagers. U.S. District Judge Ronald Lew dismissed: Unocal didn't control the Burmese army, so was not liable for Burmese military misconduct. The Ninth Circuit, insouciantly ignoring the requirement that defendants actually harm somebody, reversed: Circuit Judge Harry Pregerson said Unocal could be liable under the ATCA for aiding and abetting, through "knowing practical assistance or encouragement," Burmese human rights abuses.

While not binding outside the

Ninth Circuit, this open-ended ruling greatly expands ATCA liability. If the Second Circuit, New York's federal appeals court, adopts it, Ed Fagan's job gets much easier. Congress or the Supreme Court should lasso this runaway law.

—Howard Sutherland

[EDUCATION]

ENGLISH FOR THE CHILDREN—AND THEIR PARENTS

Unlike most advocates of high immigration, theoretical physicist and former software entrepreneur Ron Unz actually worries whether new immigrants assimilate successfully into American life. In recent years he has devoted himself to ending the scandalous practice of teaching immigrant children in bilingual education classes (actually very nearly Spanish only classes). He has brought the issue before voters in California and Arizona, winning large victories mandating "English immersion" programs in both states.

This November, Unz's "English for the Children" initiatives are before voters in Massachusetts and Colorado. Unz has long maintained that Latino immigrant parents want their children to learn English. The die-hard defenders of bilingualism are found in the bilingual education establishment and various Spanish language special interest groups. Now buttressing Unz's opponents are some rich Anglos who want Spanish environments so their own children can have foreign language immersion without having to travel abroad.

A case in point is Colorado. There an heiress named Pat Stryker (whose daughter attends a bilingual program) has pumped \$3 million into the campaign to defeat the Unz initiative—a record sum for a Colorado election. The Unz forces are locally led by Rita

Montero, a former left-wing activist who turned against bilingualism after her own son's experience.

What a showdown: an Anglo heiress v. Unz and Moreno. The latter pair is right on the merits: children learn new languages easily, and it is absurd that millions of immigrant children are attending American schools and not learning English properly.

Republican candidates would do well to back Unz's initiatives, but too often they shun them, fearful that supporting English language education will disturb Hispanic voters. It won't.

[ECONOMICS]

CAPITAL FLIGHT

A survey of leading global business executives, the *Financial Times* reports, has for the first time found China a more attractive investment than America. What better news could there be for Beijing? The Communist Party retains power, religious dissidents remain in jail, political opponents fill the insane asylums, and yet the money rolls in. After all what do demolished churches and forced abortions matter when set against, in the *FT*'s words, "the size of China's market, the vibrancy of its economy, and the perception of few competitors with entrenched positions"? (Yes, the command economy never was very high on competition.) As the evidence piles up against the promised connection between "constructive engagement" in the global economy and democracy and human rights, the Chinese are laughing all the way to the bank.

The American Conservative welcomes letters to the editor. Submit letters by e-mail to letters@amconmag.com, by fax to 703-875-3350, or by mail to 1300 Wilson Blvd., Suite 120, Arlington, VA 22209. Please include your name, address, and phone number. We reserve the right to edit all correspondence for space and clarity.

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Bush Thus Far

WHILE WE DID NOT vote for President Bush, we were pleased when he prevailed over Al Gore in the post-election chaos. In many respects Mr. Bush has proved himself able—a man for this season. But as midterm elections approach, his record is neither flawless, nor, on certain critical issues, remotely conservative.

War and peace now define the Bush presidency. Tragically, the president has painted himself into a corner with Saddam Hussein with his own relentless bellicosity. If he now retreats from his stated policy of preemptive war, he risks his political survival.

It didn't have to be this way. In the weeks following 9/11, President Bush was superb, both salving the nation and rallying it to action. His focused military campaign against the Taliban regime, which had given sanctuary to the al-Qaeda murderers, was brilliant and decisive. So too was his assembly of an international coalition against the terrorists. Then, inexplicably, with the war against al-Qaeda far from finished, the president shifted course, setting his sights on a wider war against an "axis of evil"—three nations with no discernable connection to the 9/11 attacks.

Likewise, after a strong start, the president faltered in the Middle East. He was correct and courageous to spell out his early commitment to a viable Palestinian state—understanding that a just resolution of the Palestine problem has now become a vital American interest. But then the president's clear vision became clouded by Sharonistas in his administration who echo the Likud party line. The result: a peace process in tatters and much of the Arab world a hotbed of anti-Americanism and a spawning pool for terror.

On immigration, the issue that will define the culture of America's future, the Bush record is no better. Rather than heeding the 9/11 firebell in the night, the president still shows greater concern for the feelings of *Presidente* Fox than for the security of his own countrymen. His stance confounds his own political interests, for an ever-expanding, often dependent, immigrant underclass is an unlikely repository of future Republican voters.

On domestic policy, compassionate conservatism is proving an expensive addiction, presenting American taxpayers with bottom lines indistinguishable from Clinton budgets. The Department of Education takes

cues from Ted Kennedy, agricultural handouts grow faster than the crops they subsidize, and his Department of Homeland Security threatens to expand federal control beyond previous liberal contemplation.

But the record is not all failure, for by turns the president has shown flashes of strong and often innovative leadership. Early in his tenure, the Bush White House delivered its promised tax cut and has since sent Congress solid, if sadly undefended, judicial nominees.

Equally admirable are Bush's repeated refusals to compromise American sovereignty. From the Kyoto Treaty to the International Criminal Court to missile defense, President Bush has put the world on notice that he will defend this nation's interests.

We also applaud his America First stance on imported steel. By imposing 30 percent tariffs, Bush declared his conviction that no great nation can survive the hollowing out of its manufacturing base or indefinitely sustain massive and mounting trade deficits.

Therefore, our review is mixed. President Bush has done some things masterfully, many well. But he could do more, far more. And the question that will indelibly define his presidency remains, as yet, unanswered.



THE STOCK RESPONSE we give writers inquiring about contributing to this magazine is to look at a few issues, see what we like in terms of length and style, and write us a query note. It would almost go without saying that a small magazine like ours would not be interested in an 8,000 word article replete with footnotes, even one written by a professor with a distinguished academic career.

Paul W. Schroeder's "Case Against Preemptive War" piece breaks all our editorial rules. Nonetheless, when we happened upon it over two months ago, we knew instantly that it was and would remain the single most important and compelling argument that would be made against the administration's rush to war against Iraq. Our view of it has not changed, though the debate has expanded and deepened considerably since mid-July.

—The Editors

Albert M. Nixon

WITH HIS SPEECH to the Commonwealth Club of San Francisco, Al Gore stunned his running mate Joe Lieberman, and the editors of *The New Republic*.

"Speechless" is how the house organ of the Gore campaign titled its lead editorial.

"In the 1980s and 1990s," wrote TNR, "Al Gore consistently battled the irresponsibility and incoherence of foreign affairs that plagued the Democratic Party. And it was partly out of admiration for that difficult and principled work that this magazine twice endorsed him for president."

San Francisco, however, "sounded like a political broadside against a President who Gore no doubt feels occupies a post that he himself deserves. But bitterness is not a policy position."

Yet, watching Gore live, his speech seemed less marked by the bitterness of a candidate who believes he was robbed, than by the canny calculation of a poker player who believes he is drawing to a winning hand—but not until two more cards are dealt.

Had Gore signed on to Bush's war, as Gephardt, Lieberman, and Edwards have done, how would it have availed him? Does TNR think that if U.S. Marines are patrolling Baghdad's streets by spring, George Bush will share the glory?

Politically, no one can get to the right of a president who, in Kevin Phillips' phrase, makes Barry Goldwater sound like Mahatma Gandhi. The coming war on Iraq will be "Bush's War," and for the consequences of the peace, Bush will be held accountable.

Gore knows this. By offering Democrats a choice, not an echo, he shows some of the savvy of another candidate

who believed the presidency had been stolen from him, and who gambled and won the White House in 1968: Richard M. Nixon.

Nixon used to counsel Republican candidates: Run to the right in the primaries and to the center in the general. In Gore's party, the way to upend an establishment choice is the way George McGovern did it: Rally the Left.

And the issue about which the Left cares most passionately is peace. Has Gore then become a McGovernite dove?

By no means. What he just did preempted Vermont's Howard Dean, an attractive antiwar candidate and Sen. John Kerry, who was moving to position himself as Bush's leading critic on the war. As for Tom Daschle, he is in a box and shows it. The nation backs Bush, wants Congress to authorize war, and will punish those who refuse to give Bush the power to launch war. For Daschle's Democrats to defy the president means the loss of both Houses in four weeks. But to vote for a war the Left opposes is to make them Poodles of Perle.

To save their seats, Democrats are resignedly signing on to a rewrite of the Tonkin Gulf Resolution, agonizingly aware that in 2004 their votes will be far less impressive than Gore's defiance.

Yet, Gore's speech was risky. The Israeli Lobby for which TNR is a conscious echo has been among Gore's strongest supporters. It is wild for war and exhilarated by the prospect of America smashing half a dozen Arab

radical and rogue regimes as well as Tehran, Hezbollah, and the Palestinian Authority. Moreover, the Democratic Leadership Council is surely appalled to see the party front-runner cede to George W. Bush the patriot card in 2002.

But Al Gore is not running in 2002. He is running in 2004, and while there is a near certainty the United States will crush Iraq and Bush could be at 90% again in six months, in 2004, it will not be America's victory people are talking about, but the complications and costs of America's empire. While there is irrational exuberance today about "democratizing" the Islamic world, this enterprise is about as likely to succeed as was LBJ's grand scheme to "build a Great Society on the Mekong."

Gore's stand in opposition to preemptive war has already begun to pay dividends. Edward Kennedy and Bill Clinton have taken the same stand, giving Gore the aspect of a leader, not a loner. Critics who derided Gore for deferring to consultants now credit him for courage and independence. And the Hollywood Left, whose cash and concerts will be crucial when campaign reform takes hold, has been impressed by Gore's break with Bush on the peace issue.

As war looms, look for Gore to move patriotically beside Bush as Commander-in-Chief, while dissenting from the First Diplomat on his failure to create a great war coalition. And when the war is won and "sorrows come...not single spies, But in battalions," look for Gore to challenge Bush for squandering the sacrifices of our fighting sons, as another former Vice President did in 1968. ■

[what would kant say?]

Iraq: The Case Against Preemptive War

The administration's claim of a right to overthrow regimes it considers hostile is extraordinary—and one the world will soon find intolerable.

By Paul W. Schroeder

MOST AMERICANS SEEM little concerned at the prospect of an American war on Iraq. This is surprising considering that, of America's friends and allies, only Israel openly supports it, while other states in the Middle East, including longtime rivals and enemies of Iraq, warn against it, and the Europeans view it with alarm and growing frustration. Those challenges to the planned war now being raised, moreover, tend to center on prudential questions—whether the proposed attack will work and what short-term risks and collateral damage might be involved—rather than on whether the war itself is a good idea.

The practical risks are indeed serious. The attack would entail a new military campaign while the so-called war against al-Qaeda and terrorism is far from over, involving many thousands of American troops in ground fighting with corresponding casualties, fought with few allies or none, and paid for

entirely by the United States in troubled economic times. Across the Muslim world hostility toward America is already inflamed, and radical Islamic movements are active. The global economy—particularly the oil and stock markets—is vulnerable to shock. Such a war would also come at a time when America's alliances in Europe and the Middle East are strained, certain fragile Middle Eastern and South Asian regimes are at risk, and other international dangers (tensions between India and Pakistan, North and South Korea, and China and Taiwan, and economic crisis in Latin America, to name a few) are looming. If the war succeeds in toppling Hussein, the United States will be saddled with the new responsibilities of occupying, administering, rebuilding, democratizing, and stabilizing Iraq (beyond its existing responsibilities in Afghanistan), tasks of unreckoned costs and manifold difficulties for which neither the American public nor

the administration have demonstrated much understanding, skill, or stomach. In the light of all this, the enterprise merely on practical grounds looks remarkably rash.

Yet even these grave considerations should not take priority over questions of principle: do we have a right to wage preemptive war against Iraq to overthrow its regime? Would this be a necessary and just war? What long-range effects would it have on the international system? If the answers to these questions make this truly a necessary and just war, Americans ought to be willing to make sacrifices and undergo risks for it.

On these critical issues the administration has so far won by default. The assumption that a war to overthrow Hussein would be a just war and one that, if it succeeded without excessive negative side effects, would serve everyone's interests has gone largely unchallenged, at least in the



NIP ROGERS

mainstream. The administration's justification for preemptive war is the traditional one: that the dangers and costs of inaction far outweigh those of acting now. Saddam Hussein, an evil despot, a serial aggressor, an implacable enemy of the United States, and a direct menace to his neighbors must be deposed before he acquires weapons of mass destruction that he might use or let others use against Americans or its allies. A few thousand Americans died in the last terrorist attack; many millions could die in the next one. Time is against us; once Hussein acquires such weapons, he cannot be overthrown without enormous losses and dangers. Persuasion, negotiation, and conciliation are worse than useless with him. Sanctions and coercive diplomacy have failed. Conventional deterrence is equally unreliable. Preemptive action to remove him from power is the only effective

remedy and will promote durable peace in the region.

This essay proposes to confront this case for preemptive war on Iraq head on. My argument stresses principles and long-term structural effects rather than prudence and short-term results. It rests not on judgments and predictions about future military and political developments, which I am not qualified to make, but on a perspective missing from the current discussion, derived from history, especially the history of European and world politics over the last four centuries. Rather than criticizing the proposed preemptive war on prudential grounds, it opposes the idea itself, contending that an American campaign to overthrow Hussein by armed force would be an unjust, aggressive, imperialist war which even if it succeeded (indeed, perhaps especially if it succeeded), would have negative, potentially disastrous effects on our alliances and

friendships, American leadership in the world, the existing international system, and the prospects for general peace, order, and stability. In other words, a preemptive war on Iraq would be not merely foolish and dangerous, but wrong.

This essay attempts to build a case against the war on systemic grounds; it cannot for reasons of space hope to treat all-important aspects of that systemic case or answer all possible questions and challenges. It talks about the damage a preemptive war would do to the existing international system, but not about the equally important impacts it could have in terms of side effects on nascent changes in the international system needed to meet new problems already looming on the horizon. It draws on international history in regard to preemptive wars, but will not take up a legitimate though tricky question of counterfactual history, i.e., whether certain preemptive wars, had

they been waged in the past, might have averted disasters as the advocates of such a war against Iraq claim a war will do now.¹ While examining the official case for a war on Iraq, it will not take up, except in passing fashion in the last footnote, what is possibly the unacknowledged real reason and motive behind the policy—security for Israel.

Even with these limits, this is a tall order for a short essay; the argument must be highly compressed and asserted rather than demonstrated here. But it can be condensed into four fairly simple propositions: that a preemptive war on Iraq would be:

1) Illegitimate, because it cannot be justified on any of the grounds by which preemptive wars are and should be judged and would represent and promote dangerous, lawless international behavior;

2) Incompatible with the purpose, spirit, and aims of the worldwide military and political alliances which the United States leads, and therefore harmful both to these alliances and to American leadership;

3) Incompatible also with the two central principles by which the international system has evolved over centuries, namely, the right of all states to be recognized and treated as independent, and the simultaneous and corresponding need and requirement for states to become part of associations for common purposes and to follow the rules;

4) Unnecessary, unhelpful, and utopian (better, dystopian) because some of the goals the administration proposes to achieve by preemptive war are impossible to achieve by any means, and because the essential, legitimate American aims and the requirements of the international community *vis-à-vis* Iraq can be better realized by other means.

Why Preemptive Wars Are Rarely Justified, And This One Cannot Be

WHETHER STARTING a preemptive war is justified in a particular instance is not primarily a question of international law. The critical question is whether the action is one of aggression or of legitimate self-defense, and no law can answer that. There are, however, criteria for judging the action, deriving from something more basic in international politics than specific international laws: the unwritten understandings international actors reach on an ongoing basis as to what is within the bounds, is permissible or not under the rules of the game. These understandings change with time and circumstance, of course, but a fairly wide and stable consensus on this particular issue has developed, especially in recent centuries.

To justify a resort to preemptive war, a state needs to give reasonable evidence that the step was necessary, forced upon the initiator by its opponent, and also that it represented a lesser evil, i.e., that the dangers and evils averted by war outweighed those caused the international community by initiating it. This requires showing that the threat to be preempted is (a) clear and imminent, such that prompt action is required to meet it; (b) direct, that is, threatening the party initiating the conflict in specific concrete ways, thus entitling that party to act preemptively; (c) critical, in the sense that the vital interests of the initiating party face unacceptable harm and danger; and (d) unmanageable, that is,

not capable of being deterred or dealt with by other peaceful means. These criteria are naturally open to interpretation and contest. They represent, however, a consensus of enlightened international opinion, make sense of historical experience, and are easily illustrated with historical examples. They have helped actors in the past judge claims and weigh arguments for preemptive wars and have had some effect in deterring illegitimate resorts to them.² They are stringent; most claims made to justify preemptive wars do not pass the test, which is as it should be. But the criteria are not unrealistic or utopian, and do allow for preemptive war in certain particular cases.³

In fact, the rhetoric of administration leaders and their supporters urging a preemptive war against Iraq indicates that they are generally aware of these criteria and attempt to justify war on these terms. But they cannot; their arguments everywhere break down.

To show that the threat is clear and imminent, the president and his supporters repeatedly insist that Saddam Hussein has long wanted weapons of mass destruction and tried to develop them. Since 1998, he has prevented the United Nations' international inspectors from returning to Iraq. He may therefore already be close to acquiring such weapons. The United States must stop him before he succeeds.

Seriously examined, this proves the opposite of what is required—that the threat is *not* clear and imminent. It

SUCH A WAR WOULD COME AT A TIME WHEN AMERICA'S ALLIANCES IN EUROPE AND THE MIDDLE EAST **ARE STRAINED**, CERTAIN FRAGILE MIDDLE EASTERN AND SOUTH ASIAN REGIMES ARE **AT RISK**, AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL **DANGERS ARE LOOMING**.

indicates what, under pressure, administration spokesmen must admit: we simply do not know whether Iraq has developed weapons of mass destruction, or whether it will, or when. Still less do we know what Hussein would do with them if and when he obtained any. What is more, we do not seem greatly inter-

the United States or its allies in the region.

In so doing, they ignore certain inconvenient facts—that the United States generally supported Iraq in its war against Iran, may have known and winked at his use of chemical weapons, and never at that time considered Hussein's attack on Iran or

was a worse sociopath than Hussein and even more paranoid about threats to his reign, and his record of atrocities against his own people was far worse than Hussein's; yet none of this gave any indication whether or how he would use nuclear weapons in his foreign policy. On that score, he was demonstrably cautious.

In fact, it is extremely unlikely that Hussein would do something so suicidal as to attack the United States or one of its allies directly, or allow a proxy to do so, and the administration knows it. One expert witness at the Senate hearings on the proposed campaign against Iraq, frankly admitting this, remarked that the real danger was that possessing such weapons would give Hussein and Iraq more influence in the region (a significant admission).

The administration's case thus fails both the imminence and the directness tests. Its attempts to prove that the threat is critical are no stronger. They consist mainly of repeatedly invoking the memory of 9/11 and the war on terrorism, the right of American citizens to security against terrifying new threats revealed by that attack, the duty of their government to provide that security at all costs, and (once again) the possibility that Hussein, if he does get control of nuclear or other weapons, will supply them to terrorists for use against the United States. All this lays the basis for the general doctrine, repeatedly proclaimed, that the United States has a right to prevent weapons of mass destruction from coming into the hands of evil, hostile regimes by any means necessary.

I reserve for later some discussion of how novel, dangerous, and subversive of international order and peace this new, unprecedented American doctrine is. Here the point is that

STALIN HAD NUCLEAR WEAPONS, WAS A WORSE SOCIOPATH THAN HUSSEIN AND EVEN MORE PARANOID ABOUT THREATS TO HIS REIGN, AND HIS RECORD OF ATROCITY AGAINST HIS OWN PEOPLE WAS FAR WORSE.

ested in finding out. Pleas from our closest allies, including even Tony Blair in Britain, that there must be a real effort to get UN inspectors back into Iraq before taking any other action against it, meet with impatient skepticism; any suggestion from Iraq that it might agree to this demand is dismissed as a bad joke; Vice President Richard Cheney insists that even actual UN inspections would not be enough. In short, the administration really does not know whether there is a clear and imminent threat from Iraq, cannot prove that one exists, and resists proposals for finding out because the answer might undermine its plans for war.

To show that the threat is direct, i.e., specific, concrete, and pointed at the United States, administration spokesmen and other advocates of preemptive war deduce from Saddam Hussein's criminal record and evil character, especially the fact that he used poison gas in his war against Iran and against his own people in the 1980s and has resorted to brutal repression since, that if and when he obtains weapons of mass destruction he could and would use them against

the atrocities perpetrated in it grounds for overthrowing him, and that the people whom Hussein brutally repressed in 1991 were mainly Kurds whom the United States encouraged to rise against him and then failed to support. The main point, however, is that again these arguments fail to prove what they are supposed to—i.e., that the threat from Iraq is concrete, specific, and directed against the United States or any American ally. They prove only what hardly needs proof, that Saddam Hussein is a ruthless despot who will do anything to stay in power, including using poison gas against external and internal enemies in a losing war, or slaughtering his rebellious subjects. He might indeed use weapons of mass destruction against anyone for reasons of political survival—a point which counts if anything against attacking him and putting him into that kind of corner. But this says nothing about what he might do with them under other circumstances for other purposes and certainly fails to show that he would use them against the United States or its allies or allow terrorists to do so. Stalin had nuclear weapons,

these arguments the administration and its supporters use again undercut the case for preemptive war.

How? Because they prove that the threat of international terrorism, even if it were the critical danger the administration claims it to be, does not stem from Hussein or Iraq and will not be met by ousting him. Despite many efforts, no one in the administration has ever proved a connection between Hussein or others in the Iraqi regime and September 11 or al-Qaeda and its terrorist activities. The evidence and probabilities, all well known, point the other way. Hussein's regime and his ruling party are secular rather than Islamist. He rules a country deeply divided along ethnic and religious lines, and belongs to a branch of Islam (the Sunnis) that is a minority in Iraq. He has good selfish reasons to fear radical Islamism and terrorist activity just as other governments do. Why should a ruler obsessed with maintaining his power collaborate with some of his most dangerous enemies?

The only way to argue that overthrowing Hussein would help protect Americans from international terrorism would be to claim a beneficial ripple effect from it. By demonstrating American resolve and leadership, it would discourage terrorists from targeting us and frighten off hostile regimes from helping or harboring them while encouraging other governments to join us in the fight. This is pure guesswork and very unconvincing. Our allies and friends consider a preemptive war on Iraq a proof not of resolve and leadership, but of recklessness and unilateralism and want no part of it. Terrorists and their sympathizers would find in it more weapons with which to vilify the United States, recruit followers, and bring down the traitorous Arab and Muslim regimes cooperating with America.

And so the administration's case fails again. The more one thinks about it, the more implausible it becomes to claim that the United States, a superpower with an historically unprecedented position of unchallenged military superiority, is threatened by an impoverished, ruined, insecure state halfway round the world. Yet surely, one might object, the administration's case is right in one important respect: that whatever threat, great or small, an Iraq ruled by Saddam Hussein and possessing weapons of mass destruction would present would be impossible to manage or deter by normal peaceful means. No moral scruples, religious or philosophical principles, or appeals to the long-range interests of his country would stop him from using them against us or any other enemy, and ordinary means of negotiation, coercion, and deterrence have manifestly failed in dealing

with him. Therefore, overthrowing him by war (the administration's euphemism for this is "regime change") is the only remaining choice.

FOR PURPOSES OF **DETERRING IRAQ** FROM HARMING OTHERS, THE COERCIVE MEASURES IMPOSED SINCE 1991 HAVE **WORKED WELL**.

Well, yes, this argument is correct—in one limited sense. If our basic problem is that Saddam Hussein is an evil ruler with hostile and dangerous attitudes and purposes, and if the only solution to that problem we will accept is to get rid of him right now, then the problem is indeed insoluble by peaceful means. All our past methods of dealing with him—first conciliation and appeasement, then war and crushing defeat, then extreme economic, political and military sanctions, and now massive overt threats—have failed. He remains a vil-

lain and remains in power. But to claim that any ruler we consider evil and hostile represents a danger to peace and American interests and security such that he should be overthrown by American military power is a really extraordinary claim—one that the rest of the world must sooner or later find intolerable and one out of keeping with central American traditions and values. We have not reached our position in the world by dealing with evil, hostile rulers and regimes through this policy of "regime change." (To be sure, we have sometimes used it, but mainly in dealing with small, weak governments in our own hemisphere, and these exercises in "regime change" have had, to put it charitably, very mixed results). In dealing with real, major evils and threats both to the United States and the world such as those once represented by the Soviet Union, China, and their

allies, we have won not by waging preemptive war for "regime change" but by deterring opponents from aggression and relying on outliving them, proving the superiority of our own system, and ultimately inducing peaceful change. *That* is the real American way. Equally important, one simply cannot argue on the mere ground of Hussein's survival that coercion and deterrence have failed with Iraq and must be replaced by preemptive war. The purpose of coercion and deterrence in international relations is to *deter*—to stop dangerous regimes and rulers from actually doing things that harm or threaten others—not to make such regimes disappear or such rulers commit suicide. For purposes of deter-

ring Iraq, the coercive measures imposed since 1991 have worked well. Before 1991, Hussein did many things in foreign policy that were clearly aggressive, above all his war on Iran

We had better care. Norms, rules, standards of conduct, understandings about what is and is not permissible still count in international relations, now more than ever. They govern the

THE AMERICAN EXAMPLE AND **STANDARD FOR PREEMPTIVE WAR, IF CARRIED OUT, WOULD INVITE IMITATION AND EMULATION, AND GET IT.**

and his seizure of Kuwait. Since then, Iraq, greatly weakened and restrained, has done nothing that could be called aggression against its neighbors. This is successful deterrence—effected, to be sure, at some cost to the United States in terms of effort and reputation, and enormous cost to the Iraqi people in terms of lives and standard of living, but, from a purely power-political point of view, the desired overall outcome. That Iraq and Hussein himself are not the regional menace they once were is shown by Iran's rapprochement with its old enemy and by the warning Iraq's historic rival for leadership of the Arab world, Egypt, now gives its American patron against war. They fear another war on Iraq more than they fear Iraq.

Thus the administration's case for preemptive war on Iraq fails the test on every criterion. But who cares? Why should we care if what America does in its own interest for its self-defense and that of its friends fails to satisfy some arbitrary legalistic criteria concocted by some liberal theorists and professors? What relevance do these arguments and examples drawn from history have in a world completely changed by weapons of mass destruction, instantaneous global communication and interpenetration, globalization of the economy, and the prospect of modern weapons and tools being used against us by fanatics driven by extremist ideologies?

expectations and calculations of statesmen; they influence public opinion and play a major role in the struggle for hearts and minds, increasingly important in this age of rising democracy, mass participation in politics, and instantaneous global communication. They form a central component of essential values in international politics—those universal values we constantly claim to be defending against the enemies of humankind. These norms, rules, and standards are vital not because they are immutable, unchallengeable, and enduring, but precisely because they are not. They are changeable, fragile, gained only by great effort and through bitter lessons of history, and easily destroyed, set aside, or changed for the worse for the sake of momentary gain or individual interest. And the fate of these norms and standards depends above all on what great powers, especially superpowers and hegemony, do with them and to them. The actions of great powers above all shape norms, mold expectations, provoke reactions, invite imitation and emulation, uphold or destroy or change the prevailing rules.

Consider what norm the administration's planned attack will set for the world. The United States will be declaring not simply verbally but by using its overwhelming armed force that a state may justly launch a war against another much smaller and weaker state even though it cannot

prove that the enemy represents an imminent, direct, and critical threat, or show that the threat could not be deterred or managed by means other than war. It need only claim that the regime and its leader are evil, harbor hostile intentions, are attempting to arm themselves with dangerous weapons, and might therefore attempt at some future time to carry out their hostile aims, and that this claim as to an opponent's potential capabilities and intentions, a claim made solely by the attacking state and not subject to any international examination, justifies that state in eliminating the allegedly dangerous regime and leader preemptively.

A more dangerous, illegitimate norm and example can hardly be imagined. As could easily be shown by history, it completely subverts previous standards for judging the legitimacy of resorts to war, justifying any number of wars hitherto considered unjust and aggressive. It would, for example, justify not only the Austro-German decision for preventive war on Serbia in 1914, condemned by most historians, but also a German attack on Russia and/or France as urged by some German generals on numerous occasions between 1888 and 1914. It would in fact justify almost any attack by any state on any other for almost any reason. This is not a theoretical or academic point. The American example and standard for preemptive war, if carried out, would invite imitation and emulation, and get it. One can easily imagine plausible scenarios in which India could justly attack Pakistan or vice versa, or Israel any one of its neighbors, or China Taiwan, or South Korea North Korea, under this rule that suspicion of what a hostile regime might do justifies launching preventive wars to overthrow it.

We cannot want a world that oper-

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**PATRICK J.
BUCHANAN**

**The DEATH
of the WEST**

How Dying Populations
and Immigrant Invasions Imperil
Our Country and Civilization

ates on this principle, and therefore we cannot really want to use it ourselves. In a real, practical sense, Immanuel Kant's famous ethical principle that one must so act that the principle of one's action could become a universal law must also influence the conduct of states in international politics, above all the policy of the world's only super-

power. Without some application of it especially in critical cases like this, a sane, durable international system becomes impossible.

Why a Preemptive War Would Undermine Our Alliances and World Leadership

THE PREVIOUS discussion makes it possible to answer this question more quickly. Many practical, prudential reasons explain why our allies almost unanimously oppose the idea of preemptive war on Iraq (some of them grounds already mentioned that ought to worry Americans as well). Europe has special reasons for concern: the large Muslim and Arab communities within many European states and the effects an American attack would have on their domestic politics; the fact that Europe's relations with the Arab and Muslim world geographically, historically and culturally, and even economically are much closer to the Middle East than ours, so that the repercussions of war (an oil

shock, for example) could easily be far worse for them than for us. In other words, Europeans see the United States riding roughshod over many European interests in a critical area where they have more at stake than the Americans. And if that holds for Europeans, it holds trebly for the countries of the Middle East itself, Israel excepted.

Turkey and Iran, for example, are directly, vitally interested in avoiding a war in which Iraq might break up and the Kurds fight for their independence. No Arab leader, however opposed to Saddam Hussein, wants to see Iraq destroyed or another Arab state crushed and humiliated by a Western power. And of course no moderate or pro-Western Arab or Muslim regime, vulnerable precisely because it is pro-Western, wants to stoke the fires of radical dissent and revolution with more television pictures of more Arabs being killed and their country subjugated by the Great Satan, infidel America.

Yet prudential considerations, powerful though they are, do not exhaust the reasons for the European opposition. (I cannot speak about Arabs and Muslims with any confidence.) The basic reason is precisely the one identified and discussed above: the sense that this will be an unjustified, unnecessary war, and that regardless of how it turns out militarily it will have bad long-range political consequences.

Many Americans explain away this opposition in Europe as the product of instinctive anti-Americanism, envy of American power, cynicism and world-despair (*Weltschmerz*), a war-weariness that makes them not merely eager to avoid more war, but ready to appease third-world dictators, the sense of their own decline and relative unimportance in the world, an inability to unite behind a common European foreign policy and defense capability accompanied by a tendency to carp at America for acting without them, and sometimes even anti-Semitism or a bias against Israel.

This is unfair, even where there is a modicum of substance to the charges. Americans ought to heed the advice of the logician Morris Cohen: "First, if you can, refute my arguments. Then, if you must, impugn my motives." How little real, deep anti-Americanism there is in Europe and how ineffective it has been in influencing government policy have been repeatedly demonstrated in the past fifty years, right down to the reaction to September 11. Europeans, like Canadians, are not really envious or afraid of American power *per se*—at least their governments are not, which is what counts. These governments have been, if anything, too cautious in confronting the United States and asserting their views, rights, and interests as allies. What they fear is what they see as an ignorant, arrogant American hubris and recklessness in the use of that power increasingly evidenced by this administration, especially on this issue.

If this is true, it bodes ill for the future of the Atlantic alliance, a crucial element of world peace and stability over the last fifty years. No doubt this uniquely durable and flexible alliance has survived innumerable challenges and stresses and already

has outlived the predictions of its obsolescence and demise since the end of the Cold War. It is also true that differences between the U.S.A. and its partners have always existed, and that there were European and Canadian complaints of American unilateralism and excessive reliance on force, answered by American charges of appeasement and indecision leveled against them, long before this issue became acute. But this is different. Other issues on which the two sides have disagreed during this administration (capital punishment, the Kyoto Protocol, the International Criminal Court, issues of trade and tariffs, etc.) do not really concern the central security and foreign policy aspects of the alliance. This issue goes to its heart. When the United States makes publicly clear that it intends to launch military action to overthrow the regime in a key state with which Europe has important relations regardless of what its alliance partners and other friends (e.g., Russia) think of the idea, this touches the core of the alliance as a joint instrument for security, peace, and freedom as nothing else has done in the past.

How? Both because the unilateral American planning of preemptive war against Iraq concerns the central collective security purposes of NATO and its machinery for joint action and alliance solidarity in critical situations, and also because here the general European approach to international peace clashes headlong with the American version (at least that of this administration). It will not do for the administration to say, as it often has, that it will be glad to consult with its European allies, but will do whatever it considers necessary for the defense of American interests regardless of what anyone else thinks. An essential element of any alliance relationship is

that allies must exert influence on the foreign policy of their partner(s) and that the joint alliance policy must take account of the concerns of all the partners. The administration's stand on Iraq flatly contravenes that basic requirement for a durable alliance.

If this persists, it will not necessarily mean the formal end of NATO, but it will mean its hollowing out, as America's partners search for other combinations to defend their interests and find refuge from the likely consequences of America's actions and as America's opponents are encouraged to seek partners and form coalitions against it. America's power and position are strong enough and its margin of error wide enough that it can get away with a good deal of what one administration spokesman described as "internationalism à la carte," calling for support where it wants it, going its own way when it wishes, and insisting on having its way as the leader. But there are limits, and on this crucial issue the United States could well overstep them.

Why This Preemptive War Would Attack the Foundations of the International System—and Why We Should Care

THIS IS A BIT more abstract and needs a little more thumbnail history of the current international system to explain, but the basic point is not hard to understand. The planned war would violate and weaken the two basic principles which, developed over the past five centuries and combined in a fruitful tension, have enabled the international system to work and peace to grow in our own time.

Since the 16th century, the international system, first confined to Western Europe, then expanding to all of Europe, then becoming global under European domination, and now sim-

ply global, has developed inexorably though unevenly, with many advances and retreats, in two fundamental directions, different and divergent from each other, but nevertheless inextricably united. The first direction is the recognition and acceptance of the idea that the system must consist of independent units (in the main, states) coexisting in a coordinate system of equal juridical status and rights, as opposed to the medieval hierarchical system in which power and authority descended in ranks from God to Emperor to kings and princes down to the lowliest peasant. The triumph of this principle is usually ascribed, not wrongly but too simply and prematurely, to the Peace of Westphalia in 1648 ending the Thirty Years War and the era of religious wars in Europe.

The second major direction of development appears directly contrary to the first. It is the movement toward the association of independent units in international relations into unions (leagues, alliances, confederations, associations, etc.) for common vital purposes that could be realized only through such associations, the most important of these being stable peace and security. The fundamental story of that movement toward association, allowing for all the ups and downs, advances and retreats, is that this movement, though hopeless and marginal in its effects in the 16th, 17th, and much of the 18th centuries, nonetheless experienced a major early flowering in the 19th, and, after apparently disastrous setbacks in the early 20th, has ripened and borne unprecedented fruit in the late 20th century.

I am aware that the notion that the history of international politics over the last four to five centuries has been one fundamentally of the growth and development of international peace

will strike many as absurd, if not perverse. Yet I think it can be demonstrated (though not here). The central point is that while it may be difficult and controversial to document a decline in the incidence of war and other violent international conflict, including organized terrorism, there is no question or difficulty at all in demonstrating the reality over the centuries of a huge, immensely valuable growth in international peace. Critical areas of modern international relations—trade and business, communications, travel by land, sea and sky, the commercial use and exploitation of the sea and sky, international tourism and travel, international science and scholarship, immigration and emigration, the control of state borders, international property rights and business practices—even human and civil rights and religion—which were once in the realm of war, that is, governed solely by power, force, fraud, and individual state self-interest, have now throughout the developed world been generally brought into the realm of peace. That is, they have been brought under the governance of international treaties, conventions, common practices, and institutions to enforce jointly accepted rules. Where this is not true in certain parts of the world, we notice, it makes a critical difference, and we try to do something about it. The modern world in which we participate, from which we profit, and of which we boast could not operate without this enormous expansion of the realm of peace in international affairs. And this expansion is the product of a long-sought, dearly-bought, highly fragile combination of these

two fundamental principles of modern international relations: the recognition of state independence, and the willing acceptance by most international actors of the necessity and benefits of international associations and their requirements and rules.

This structure is what the intended American preemptive war on Iraq threatens and would violate. It would do so in two ways: by denying the right of Iraq to be treated as an independent state, and by rejecting the obligation of the United States to comply with the requirement bearing on all states to join in international associations and to abide by certain rules. The fundamental offense committed by Iraq against the United States is not any particular aggression or criminal act. The only one of these in the litany of Saddam Hussein's crimes to which we decided to respond was his occupation of Kuwait, and that was duly reversed and punished. The offense has been and still is that Iraq, under the leadership of someone we consider an international criminal, has purportedly been trying persistently to acquire the same weapons that both we and most of our best friends and a number of neutral states already possess, namely, weapons of mass destruction. Note that our argument is not that these weapons (nuclear, biological, chemical) are inherently illegal and dangerous and should be banned universally by the international community. We could not argue that without condemning ourselves along with our friends, as we are notoriously the world's largest possessors of such weapons and have no intention of giving them up. The charge is rather that

states like Iraq, because they have undemocratic governments, unjust social structures, dangerous ideologies, and criminal leaders (all according to American criteria) have no inherent right to seek or possess the same weapons of mass destruction as law-abiding democratic states possess, and deserve to be restrained, punished, and finally militarily overthrown by the United States if they persist in developing them, regardless of what other states think about this procedure.

Only deliberate effort enables one fully to grasp the implications of such a position. It is as clear a negation of the fundamental principle of the juridical equality and coordinate status of all recognized states within the international system as one could imagine. To put it bluntly, Washington declares that there is one law for the United States and other states of which it approves, and another law for all the rest. It is Orwellian: all states are equal, but some, especially the United States, are vastly more equal than others. There is no state, allied, friendly, neutral, or hostile, that will not note this implication, and fear it.

This position and policy is more than Orwellian; it is imperialist. I know full well how slippery, ill-defined, and emotionally loaded this term usually is, and how often and easily it is abused. Let me, at the risk of personalizing the discussion, state quickly the standpoint from which I make this claim. I consider myself by every standard save that of the current one-sided American political spectrum a conservative, especially in political outlook and general world view. I have no sympathy with the view that America has been historically an imperialist power. There are major imperialist chapters and aspects in its history, of course, and it was a full participant with others in the great wave of

IT IS FROM THIS CONSERVATIVE, PRO-AMERICAN STANCE THAT I CLAIM THAT THIS WOULD BE AN IMPERIALIST WAR.

late 19th and early 20th century European imperialism, but its founding ideology was and remains anti-imperialist, it has passed up more tempting opportunities for imperialist gain than it seized, and its overall record is more anti-imperialist than imperialist down to this day. Nor do I share the left-wing denunciation of American hegemony as *per se* a great menace today. It has its dangers and negative aspects, but on balance American leadership has done much more good than harm in the decades since World War II, and I want it in general to continue. It is precisely from this conservative, pro-American stance that I claim that this would be an imperialist war.

I do so because there is no defensible definition of imperialism that would not fix that label upon it. Imperialism means simply and centrally the exercise of final authority and decision-making power by one government over another government or community foreign to itself. Empire does not require the direct annexation and administration of a foreign territory or its people; in fact, it usually does not mean that at all. Imperial rule is normally indirect, exercised through local authorities co-opted by the imperial regime. This was the case with the Roman Empire, the so-called Holy Roman Empire, the British, the Ottoman, the Napoleonic, and many others one could name—even Hitler's short-lived one. All that is required for an imperial relationship is that the final authority and power over crucial decisions of foreign policy, war and peace, and the place of the territory and people within the international system lie with the imperial power.

This is the relationship between America and Iraq that this war intends and is designed to establish. We intend to use armed force against Iraq in order to acquire the power to

decide who shall rule Iraq, what kind of government it will have, what kind of weapons it will develop for its own security, what kind of foreign policy it will have, and whose side and what stance it will take in the crucial questions affecting it and its region (Israel, terrorism, Islamism versus secular rule, even for some Americans what

the recognition of the independence and equal status of states, this war also would violate its counterpart, the principle of association and the need to observe community rules and bounds. In planning and preparing for this war, the United States is declaring to the world that it really does not consider this principle of association binding

WASHINGTON DECLARES THAT THERE IS ONE LAW FOR THE UNITED STATES AND OTHER STATES OF WHICH IT APPROVES, AND ANOTHER LAW FOR ALL THE REST. IT IS ORWELLIAN: ALL STATES ARE EQUAL, BUT SOME, ESPECIALLY THE UNITED STATES, ARE VASTLY MORE EQUAL THAN OTHERS.

kind of economy it will develop and what kind of educational and social systems it will erect under American tutelage). This is clearly imperialism, even if we claim and really believe that we are doing it for noble ends—liberation, democracy, capitalism, human rights, whatever. Nineteenth century imperialism was also conducted under the banner of noble ends—Christianity, civilization, an end to the slave trade, economic development, etc.

Let no one reply that this is what we did to Nazi Germany and Imperial Japan after World War II, with great benefit to them and the rest of the world. We went to war with these powers because they attacked us and many other nations. That was a justified defensive war, and the dimensions of the war, the enormous damage it did, the crimes and atrocities Germany and Japan committed in it (though we and our allies were not blameless), and the dimensions of their defeat justified and virtually compelled an occupation and period of tutelage. A preemptive war on Iraq is a totally different proposition.

Besides being imperialist in violating one fundamental basis of world order,

upon it; that the American government intends to decide what is best for the United States itself, on its own, listening perhaps to what allies and friends have to say, but acting strictly for its own self-defined interests; and that we do not need the sanction of the UN, NATO, or any other association or institution to which we belong and lead to justify it—this despite our knowledge that in this issue and decision the vital interests of many other countries, some of them our closest allies, are at stake even more than our own.

Once again, we cannot want a world that operates by these rules—but that is the world we would be promoting.

Why A Preemptive War On Iraq Is Unnecessary And Unhelpful For Security

ONE POSSIBLE response to this argument might go as follows: "If you are right that we should not do this, what do you suggest as the alternative—that we simply sit on our hands and let Hussein and other dangerous leaders develop weapons of mass destruction with no control on their possible use by themselves or by terrorists? Must we really wait until we (i.e., the United

States and allied countries it protects) are actually attacked or at least overtly, directly, demonstrably threatened before we may justifiably respond?"

Good, powerful questions. The reply is: if the response is preemptive war, then the answer is yes. We cannot use that response to a merely potential threat, even one involving weapons of mass destruction. That is what a decent, sane world of international politics requires. The mere fact that another state that we dislike and distrust develops weapons of mass destruction does not entitle us or anyone else to go to war with it, much less overthrow its government on account of it. It would not have justified a war by the United States or any other state against the Soviet Union, France, Britain, China, India, Pakistan, Israel, or any other present or future nuclear power—including above all the USA itself.

But if the question is (as it should

weapons programs and terrorist organizations, international pressure in crises to settle quarrels without the use of such weapons, even in some instances military police actions—all these and more are a part of our common arsenal. While they have not worked ideally in regard to the spread of such weapons and could not be expected to, they have worked perfectly on the most important aspect: their use. No one has used a nuclear device in warfare since 1945, despite many crises and possible opportunities. Nor has any government, even those that harbor and tolerate terrorists, given terrorists weapons of mass destruction to use. And the current international cooperation the United States has received in fighting terrorism is quite remarkable.

That this does not guarantee perfect security for us or anyone else is true—but nothing can, least of all preemptive war. We have, however, powerful

the possible nests and sources of terrorism through military action is like trying to kill fleas with a hammer: it does more damage to oneself and the environment than to the fleas. (This does not at all rule out armed police actions like those against the Taliban or identifiable rebel groups.) The idea of eliminating all evil regimes that might use weapons of mass destruction or let terrorists use them is impossible and counterproductive, a bad dream.

What too many seem to forget, however, is that we and others have lived through this sort of danger before, and that defensive measures short of war can work. The menace of having nuclear weapons in the hands of mortal enemies who might use them against us was far greater during the Cold War than it is now. A few then called for preventive war to eliminate it; they were, thank God, not heeded. Terrorism has been around for centuries, and several countries in the 19th and 20th centuries, notably Spain, Russia, Italy, and the United Kingdom, survived worse terrorist campaigns and threats than we have experienced or are likely to experience. Right now the threat of terrorism is greater for the Philippines, Israel, Colombia, Peru, Nepal, and Sri Lanka than for us. Terrorism, like nuclear war, is an evil we must of course combat, but cannot hope to extirpate and must learn to endure and outlive.

In other words, a preemptive war against Iraq would be unnecessary as well as wrong, and would serve no useful purpose⁴ while doing us, the Iraqi people, the world, and the international system great harm. When the great American historian Charles A. Beard was asked at the end of his career what was the most important thing he had learned from history, he replied, "That the mills of God grind slowly, but they

WE AND OTHERS HAVE LIVED THROUGH THIS SORT OF DANGER BEFORE, AND DEFENSIVE MEASURES SHORT OF WAR CAN WORK.

be), "Are there things we can do other than preemptive war to deal with the dangers of the development and spread of weapons of mass destruction, dangers apparently multiplied by the rise of international terrorism and of fanatical anti-Western ideologies and movements?" then the answer is easy. Of course there are. We have already been doing them along with many others in the world for a considerable time, and overall they are working well. International treaties and conventions to control and limit their development and spread, the tools of diplomacy, negotiation, and sanctions to discourage governments from such programs, international cooperation on intelligence regarding both such

means of defense and deterrence both within our own hands and available through the international system—another good reason for not wrecking it by preemptive war. If new, more effective means to check new dangers are needed, this system is the way to develop them. If we use these means and this system sensibly, we can enjoy a measure of security far greater than most of the rest of the world has enjoyed in the past or enjoys now.

If this seems not good enough, it is because of our own unrealistic perceptions and expectations. There can be no perfect security against either terrorism or weapons of mass destruction—especially not through the use of military force. Trying to eliminate all

grind exceeding small, and that chickens always come home to roost." He was an agnostic, and so presumably meant only that this was the way history ultimately worked out, and that long-range systemic consequences were the most important. He was right. If we carry out what we are now planning, then regardless of any short-term success we may have, our chickens will ultimately come home to roost. ■

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NOTES

I wish to thank Dr. Levin von Trott zu Solz and Professors Edward Kolodziej, John Mueller, Margaret L. Anderson, Juan Cole, and David Kaiser for helpful comments and suggestions.

1. I will mention only one such argument in passing here: the superficially plausible idea that a preventive war launched against Hitler's Germany in 1936 at the time of Germany's reoccupation of the Rhineland or in 1938 at the annexation of Austria would have prevented all the horrors of World War II and the Holocaust. (A war at the time of the Munich Crisis would not have been preemptive, but rather a legitimate defensive war fought by France and the Soviet Union in fulfillment of their clear alliance obligations to Czechoslovakia, with Britain joining in for the same balance of power reasons that had brought it into World War I.) My reply, in sketchy thumbnail fashion, would be that asking French and British statesmen in 1936 or early 1938 to launch a preemptive war against Germany on the basis of what Germany had done to that point would amount not only to asking them to commit political suicide, but to demanding that they play God or be God. No one could know in 1936 or 1938 the true, horrible extent of future Nazi crimes and therefore know or predict that preemptive war would prevent a world war of catastrophic dimensions or a Holocaust. The predictable and calculable evils of launching a preemptive war at that time, in other words, outweighed the pre-

dictable, calculable evils of waiting and trying to prevent war entirely. The real criticism of British and French policy is not their failure to launch preemptive war, but their failure or refusal to take either the Rhineland occupation or the Anschluss seriously and to undertake a resolute course of deterrence and collective security. In fact, both events caused them to abandon the halfhearted efforts at deterrence of Germany they had initiated and go over to appeasement. Thus the argument for preemptive war in the 1930's really supports the case made here for deterrence.

2. For example, it was these general criteria that guided Prince Bismarck in rejecting the urgings of General Count Waldersee, the Prussian army's Chief of Staff, for preventive war on Russia in 1888-89, and that led Emperor Franz Joseph and several of his chief ministers to resist up to 1914 the various schemes for preventive war promoted by the Austro-Hungarian Chief of Staff General Conrad von Hoetzendorf.

3. Let me flesh this out with a little history, not to prove my points (impossible in a short essay) but to illustrate them and keep them from being naked assertions. Four examples of preemptive wars that I consider justified are Prussia's attack on Saxony in 1756 which set off the Seven Years War, Japan's attack on Russia in 1904, and Israel's resort to preemptive attacks on Egypt in 1956 and 1967. In every case all the stated criteria are met. Note, however, that even in these cases those who chose preemptive war were not necessarily blameless, or fighting purely in self-defense. Prussia had largely created the Austro-Russian-French threat against it by its lawless seizure of Austrian Silesia in 1740. Japan, though genuinely threatened by Russian imperialism, also had its own program of imperialism in East Asia. And, as revisionist Israeli historians have proved, territorial expansion was a part of Israeli aims in starting both these wars. Still less do these examples or others make preemptive war, even when justified, necessarily a wise choice or indicate that if victorious it will have good results. The attacking state in all these instances of justified preemptive war won the resulting war or at least did not lose. But each of these preemptive wars, even though successful, led to more conflict and complications later, and the more normal results of preemptive war are much worse. Austria, for example, tried preemptive war twice in the 19th century—against Napoleon in 1809 and against Sardinia-Piedmont in 1859—and once in the 20th—against Serbia in 1914. In the first and

last instances, I would argue (though many historians would disagree) that the Austrians had a pretty good case justifying preemptive war as their only way to remain an independent great power. Yet all three ended disastrously. In other words, preemptive war can occasionally be justified as a last resort, but it is never inherently a good policy—only in certain cases the least bad one available.

4. There is one possible (in my view, likely) motive for the planned war that I will mention only in this footnote, not because it is unimportant but because it involves too many delicate issues to be discussed adequately here. Some have ascribed President Bush's determination to oust Saddam Hussein to certain personal or domestic political aims, among them his desire both to emulate his father and to surpass him while avoiding his mistakes, especially the alleged mistake of failing to finish the job of destroying Hussein's regime in 1991. Without claiming any privileged sources of information, I doubt that these are more than contributing factors. Much more plausible is the suggestion that this plan is being promoted in the interests of Israel. Certainly it is being pushed very hard by a number of influential supporters of Israel of the hawkish neoconservative stripe in and outside the administration (Richard Perle, Paul Wolfowitz, William Kristol, and others), and one could easily make the case that a successful preventive war on Iraq would promote particular Israeli security interests more than general American ones.

If this is an important factor, then I would make just two comments. First, it would represent something to my knowledge unique in history. It is common for great powers to try to fight wars by proxy, getting smaller powers to fight for their interests. This would be the first instance I know where a great power (in fact, a superpower) would do the fighting as the proxy of a small client state. Second, while Israel's survival and security certainly represent a vital interest for the United States, the Middle East, and the world, I am convinced that a preemptive war on Iraq would be as counterproductive in the long run as the Israeli occupation of Lebanon engineered by Ariel Sharon or the current Sharon/Likud efforts to destroy Palestinian resistance and terrorism and abort any independent Palestinian state by sheer military force. There are better ways for America to insure Israel's survival, including, for example, a full, formal military alliance and territorial guarantee. But that is a separate though closely related topic too vast and complex to open here.

[not dancing soon]

Voices from Baghdad Streets

It's hard to find an Iraqi who welcomes the prospect of a *blitzkrieg* followed by the installation of a puppet regime.

By John Laughland

BAGHDAD—"EENGLEESH? Very good." The taxi driver broke into a broad smile. Smiling is something the Iraqis do a lot. At first they fix you with their dark doe eyes as you walk down the street. Then, as soon as you greet them, their expressions crack open in delight and their eyes shine: they are among the most gentle, open, charming, and civilized people I have ever met. "You know Mr. Galloway?" George Galloway is an antiwar Labour MP who travels to Iraq so regularly in support of that beleaguered country that he is known in the House of Commons as "the Honourable Member for Baghdad South." "Yes," I replied. "Is he good?" "Very good!" the driver grinned. I saw my chance: "What about George Bush?" At this, the driver gave a mildly contemptuous spitting sound and brushed the air away lazily with a backward movement of his hand, as if swatting a pesky fly. The name "Blair" elicited the same response, and we laughed together. Then, without any prompting on my part, he pointed silently upwards to one of the hundreds of portraits of Saddam Hussein which look down on the streets of Baghdad. With a knowing glint in his eye, the driver silently raised his thumb in pride and admira-

tion for his president. He grinned again.

Since most meetings between journalists and Iraqis are conducted in the presence of a minder from the Ministry of Information, such private encounters with ordinary citizens are rare and valuable. During a week in Baghdad, everyone I met corroborated the view that the Iraqi president has considerable real support among his own population. This support is said to be strongest among the poor and the working classes. The intelligentsia's main beef with the regime is over its clumsy censorship, which means they cannot watch al-Jazeera on satellite TV. Many of them reason that their secular dictatorship is better than the theocracies of neighboring Iran and Saudi Arabia. It is also true that Cairo and Amman are far more heavily policed than Baghdad. Although it is impossible to measure public opinion accurately in a closed society like Iraq, it is one of the most frightening elements of Anglo-American megalomania to believe that ordinary people—with their daily concerns about getting the children to school, doing the shopping and fixing the car—would actually want to have a *blitzkrieg* unleashed on them so that two powers which have besieged and bombed their

country for the last ten years can install a puppet regime.

Iraqis are, quite rightly, incensed at the humiliation visited upon them by Washington and London since 1991. They regard the dropping of five or six Hiroshima's worth of bombs during the Gulf War as a brutal and vicious response by a distant power to a local intra-Arab quarrel; they seethe with indignation at the indulgence shown by America and Britain to their arch-enemy Israel, which inflicts daily humiliation on their Arab pride. Twentieth century Iraqi history provides ample evidence of the Iraqis' readiness to shake off the colonial and cryptocolonial yoke: they evicted the British-installed King Faisal in 1958, and the Ba'ath party subsequently overthrew the government of Brigadier Qasim because it showed insufficient devotion to the cause of Arab nationalism and unity. Such feelings have only been strengthened by the last decade of Anglo-American attacks, which have consisted of an exquisite combination of the most ancient and the most modern forms of warfare: siege and aerial bombardment. The sanctions regime in place since August 1990 is the most draconian the UN has

ever imposed, while the 40,000 and more sorties flown since 1998 by British and American planes over the two no-fly zones constitute one of the greatest unreported wars in history.

Iraqis know that this is all thanks to the British and the Americans: not only is there no mention of no-fly zones in the original UN resolutions, but also the Anglo-American mantra about "protecting the Kurds in the North and the Shiites in the South" corresponds to no reality at all. The Northern no-fly zone covers only half of the Kurdish autonomous zone and includes parts of Iraqi territory that are still under the full control of Baghdad, while the Southern zone covers territory where Sunni Muslims and Shiites live cheek by jowl. There are at least a million Shiites in Baghdad alone, although the Iraqi capital is not "protected" by British and American planes. Consequently, Iraqis see the raids as simple aggression. Indeed, in my experience, people who live under dictatorship are often less susceptible to easy slogans from politicians than those who have been brought up believing in the old lie about "government of the people, by the people, and for the people." When a professor of English at Baghdad University asked me, "How can you in the West live under such constant propaganda?" I appreciated the irony of the situation but could not think of a neat answer.

Whatever way you look at it, therefore, the twin regime of sanctions and bombing has caused an intense feeling of resentment against the very powers that now pretend they will be welcomed as liberators by the Iraqi people. As one senior Ba'ath party official said to me, "When the Americans say there will be dancing in the streets if Saddam is toppled, they are simply reading from a book they have written themselves." An economist put it another way: "There will not be dancing in the

streets if Saddam is overthrown; there will be blood." The professor of English said, "I have three sons, aged between 18 and 26. Do you think I will hide them in the house if there is a war? We have seen many wars. We have suffered a great deal. If it is to be our fate to fight against the invader, we will have to face it." When mothers tell you they are prepared to sacrifice their sons for national liberty, it is serious.

One of the first private conversations I had in Baghdad was with a parish priest at a Chaldean Catholic church in downtown Baghdad. He said that many Iraqis feared civil war if there was an American attack: Iraq has internal ethnic and religious divisions that have probably grown more acute in the last decade, especially as the country's standard of living has dropped vertiginously as a result of war and sanctions. And when I asked the priest's bishop what ordinary Iraqis thought of their president, he replied—also in a private conversation—"They think that he is doing the best for their country." That bishop, indeed, was virulent in his denunciation of American war-mongering. "Never before in history," he said, "has such a powerful country as America been able to occupy such a small country. This is all about greed and the desire for profit. If England or America had oil, would they say to the rest of the world, 'Come and take it?' America talks always about justice and human rights, but it does the very opposite. Why can Israel have nuclear arms and we not? Why can Palestine be destroyed without any fuss? Where's the balance in that? George Bush is behaving like a dictator. How can he attack others as dictators when he is the same? It is a

sin of the world for people to support the strong against the weak. George Bush says he believes in God. But which God? Does the God of the Protestants want death and destruction? All this is a result of the collapse of faith in the world." Although our conversation was unmonitored, the bishop did not at any point give the slightest credence to the Anglo-American theory that the people would welcome a war to liberate them from Saddam. Quite the contrary.

How could it be otherwise, indeed, when those American politicians who proclaim their desire to see the whole Arab world *gleichgeschaltet* appear to most Iraqis to be mere tools in the hands of Israel? Many Iraqis argue openly that Israel is the chief reason for the impending American war on Iraq. This is certainly the view of Dr. Hammamm Al-Shamaa, a professor of economics: he eagerly refers to Israel's ambitions to control everything "from the Nile to the Euphrates." Dr. Al-Shamaa adds that the U.S.A. is picking on Iraq because it is both the Arab state with the most resolutely anti-Zionist policy (it wants the state of Israel to disappear) and also the only one that so tragically proved its capacity to wage a long war of attrition when it fought Iran in the 1980s. He and other Iraqis therefore think of George Bush's Iraqi policy as nothing but Ariel Sharon's policy writ large—an idea that has been given subsequent credence by the plans for the "democratization" of the entire Middle East outlined by people like Robert Kaplan and Paul Wolfowitz.

Iraq's only "tolerated oppositionist" is Dr. Wamith Umar. An alumnus of the University of Durham, England, Dr. Umar first met Saddam Hussein Al-

THEY REGARD THE DROPPING OF FIVE OR SIX HIROSHIMA'S WORTH OF BOMBS DURING THE GULF WAR AS A BRUTAL AND VICIOUS RESPONSE BY A DISTANT POWER TO A LOCAL INTRA-ARAB QUARREL.

Tikriti in 1959, when they both frequented the same Arab nationalist circles in Egypt. Although Umar was imprisoned twice by the Ba'athists after their first coup in 1963, his relations with senior party cadres are now cordial. In print and in speech, he calls on the Iraqi regime to democratize. "But the Ba'athists look to the examples of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia," Dr. Umar says. "They see that reform in the Soviet Union led to the collapse of the country, while Milosevic's decision to hold free elections in 1990 resulted only in his eventual imprisonment as a war criminal." Umar believes that democracy is necessary to Iraq's national survival: "How can you ask Iraqis to fight for the state if they do not feel that the state belongs to them? Democracy is necessary for the survival of the country." But even he disagrees that the people will rejoice if Saddam is overthrown by the Americans. "No people in the world would prefer to see a foreign army invading their country, even if the invader claimed to be acting on their behalf. People here are very bitter towards Britain and America. Iraqis feel targeted by them, so why should they want to be invaded by them? Moreover," he added, "the oppositionists whom the Americans want to foist on us are seen as common thieves. The Iraqis regard this simply as an insult. Even if the Americans succeed in overthrowing the regime, the majority of Iraqis will continue to resist foreign rule."

Is he right? Time will tell. But when I asked an Iraqi friend the identity of a man whose statue stands in central Baghdad, she replied coolly and without the slightest malice, "Oh, that is one of our wartime prime ministers. He preferred to commit suicide rather than collaborate with the British." ■

John Laughland is a writer and lecturer based in London.

[counting moral costs]

One Tiny Little Creature

Endangering oneself to save an innocent has no place in electronic soldiering.

By Nicholas von Hoffman

... Ivan said with emotion ... "Tell me yourself directly. I challenge you—reply: imagine that you yourself are erecting the edifice of human fortune with the goal of, at the finale, making people happy, or at least giving them peace and quiet, but that in order to do it, it would be necessary and unavoidable to torture to death only one tiny little creature ... and on its unavenged tears to found that edifice, would you agree to be the architect on those conditions, tell me and tell me truly?"

"No, I would not agree," Alyosha said quietly.

—*The Brothers Karamazov*,
Fyodor Dostoevsky

ON A SATURDAY morning in September, at the Al-Mansour Pediatric Hospital in Baghdad, mothers sat as usual on bare mattresses next to children languishing with leukemia and cancer. The youngsters are not getting adequate chemotherapy; the U.S.-led embargo continues to block some crucial medications. Walking through the cancer ward, I remembered the response from then-Secretary of State Madeleine Albright when, during a *60 Minutes* interview that aired on May 12, 1996, CBS correspondent Lesley Stahl asked: "We have heard that a half a million children have died.... Is the price worth it?" Albright replied: "I think this is a very hard choice, but the

price—we think the price is worth it."

So typical of us to ask if the "price" is worth it. The question itself is kind of crazy, although we ask and answer it all the time. What does it cost us to kill an Iraqi child? And who is paying this price? Shouldn't this kind of question be directed to the child's parents? Or—God help us—do we literally mean what it cost in dollars and cents?

Let's take time out for a moment to ponder the impracticalities of the hour, the non-military, the non-public-policy, the non-national-defense aspects of the killing we are girding ourselves up to do. Let's be silly and spend a minute or two on the moral foundation for sending the unmanned bomber drones out to romp about Iraq with lethal effect. Let's be unrealistic and look at two questions: the first concerns killing civilians, and the second concerns torturing that child, Dostoevsky's tiny little creature.

The agony, the death and maiming of non-soldiers, be they children or anyone else, is justified under the doctrine of collateral damage. As long as those doing the killing are not aiming at non-combatants, the accidental death or disfigurement of those noncombatants is regrettable but not culpable. Over a period of time a lot of people who have no part in the battle can die. Most of the

tens of millions who perished in the wars of the 20th century were civilians, a hefty percentage of whom were not deliberately slaughtered.

The doctrine of collateral damage, as it is spun out from time to time at the Pentagon press office lectern by Donald Rumsfeld, admits of no qualifications or exceptions. No culpability to the killers, only to the government of the killed. If, for example, Saddam Hussein were to put anti-aircraft equipment in a kindergarten, the blame for the subsequent deaths of the children from a nicely aimed smart bomb, which did no damage to nearby homes, would be Hussein's alone. There is no balancing of goods and bads, no criterion of military urgency, no corollary to the collateral damage doctrine enumerating situations in which it would be better to leave Hussein's guns intact than to fire on the human shields.

That kind of consideration is inadmissible since not shooting increases the danger to your own people, your own pilots, and no country has been more successful at killing without being killed than the United States. There is no chivalry, no code of pagan warrior nobility in advanced forms of American war-making. The thought of endangering oneself to save an innocent has no place in electronic soldiering.

But the morality of collateral damage doesn't go to the question Ivan poses to his brother Alyosha. The nub of that question is, will you torture a child, if that is what you must do to make people, all people, happy? This question arose the instant the United States announced it was going to war against Iraq, not only to disarm the country but to effect "regime change," which is, of course, Newspeak for overthrowing the government.

Alyosha says he could not torture a child even if the result were the happiness of mankind. In short, torture of a

child is in itself, an act of such wickedness that no circumstances, no rationalizations, no explanations can make it morally permissible. It's just wrong.

A regime change war in Iraq will involve the torture of more than one child. (A child's leg caught under a wall is as much torture as anything administered by a man with a thumbscrew.) Aloysha will not torture for a reason so powerful as human happiness. What would he say if Ivan asked him if he would torture a child for regime change? There is a goal less elevated than human happiness.

Assuming this is to be another war in which we suffer no losses which are not accidentally self-inflicted, it is the Iraqis on whom the death tax will be levied—so many in the prime of life, so many who are old and, I suppose, discredable, and so many children. We're

told it's for a good cause, which, if they don't understand now, they'll understand later and thank us for.

Let's not indulge in exaggeration. Let's not call the impending *fracasso* in Iraq naked aggression. If anything this will be clothed aggression, bedecked in UN resolutions; press conferences; and infoblats of truth, near truth, and screaming omissions. So let freedom's war trumpets blare around the globe.

Whether or not the small noises made by the tortured child will be heard is hard to say. ■

Nicholas von Hoffman is a former columnist for the Washington Post and Point-Counterpoint commentator for CBS's 60 Minutes. He is the author of many books, most recently Capitalist Fools: Tales of American Business, from Carnegie to Forbes to the Milken Gang (1992).

Jim Chapin, 1941-2002

RIGHT AS THIS issue went to press, I received the shattering news that Jim Chapin had died of a heart attack at his New Jersey home. He was one my oldest friends, and certainly the one with whom I had the longest unbroken contact. I met Jim in 1976, when he worked for the Fred Harris campaign and I for Jimmy Carter; when Harris dropped out, he came into Carter's New York headquarters to negotiate the transfer of the Harris delegate slates into the Carter camp. He brought with him a bound volume of *Chess Life and Review*, marking him a fellow chess addict (and upper middling player). Later that summer, we spent a week at his New Jersey home playing chess, talking with his irascible grandfather, the literary critic Ken-

neth Burke, and tending his two young boys.

He was then (and I think always remained) a democratic socialist, a follower of the late Michael Harrington; I was evolving from being a Carter supporter into a neoconservative and was soon publishing Cold War pieces in *Commentary*. Jim knew the neoconservatives well and not that favorably. (The democratic socialist movement had recently undergone a bitter split over the Vietnam war between the Harringtonites and a nascent neoconservative faction led by Carl Gershman.) But he was curious and interested in my political evolution—and happy to help me hone my arguments. (He once told me that WASPs were especially gifted at not letting political differences

intrude on friendship.) In 1983, a week before the fact, he called me up to say "If Ronald Reagan really wants to invade somewhere, he should invade Grenada." After the invasion, I wrote a quick op-ed, confident (entirely because of the Chapin analysis) of the wisdom of the move. It was published in the *New York Times*. I know my experience—advancing my own name on the back of Jim's wisdom—was hardly unique. Almost everyone with whom he came in contact went away smarter.

Jim was, as all who knew him would attest, a kind of genius: a man who read quickly and widely, who knew more history and could have the right historical analogy at his fingertips better than anyone I have ever known (including the best professors in the Columbia Uni-

versity history department). For some reason he never entirely succeeded at what would have been his natural profession; he taught American history for a while at Yale, for a while at Rutgers, didn't publish much, didn't get tenure, drifted into other things: working for the Socialist International and building the anti-poverty foundation, World Hunger Year. While a good writer, he spoke better than he wrote—almost as if the ideas came pouring out too fast for capture on the printed page. In his last two years, he became a political analyst for UPI, and we had planned to draw on his analytical work often in these pages.

Jim was friend and advisor to people from across the political spectrum. He was the principal idea man for Mark Green, the almost mayor of

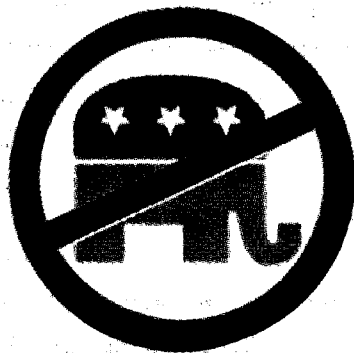
New York. Though no conservative (except in a cultural sense) and no Buchananite, he was interested in the Buchanan phenomenon, very conscious of its strong roots in American history and its renewed relevance in a period of political reshuffling and upheaval. He was one of the first subscribers to this magazine, and we will be will be far poorer without him.

Jim came from a complicated family and I think may have been be most proud of the strength of his own family life: his relationship with his two sons, James and David, now grown, and his wife Diana. He bore his own health ailments cheerfully enough, and one never imagined that he could die so many years before his time.

—Scott McConnell

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Arts & Letters

FILM

[Barbershop]

Reparations for Cadillac Dealers

By Steve Sailer

LOS ANGELES, (UPI)—The modestly budgeted ensemble comedy “Barbershop” is one of the most likable movies of the year, sort of a black “My Big Fat Greek Wedding.”

The conservative moral and social messages and unhip style (complete with Laurel and Hardy-style slapstick) of “Barbershop” have left ill at ease many white critics—the kind whose highest term of praise is “subversive.”

Rapper Ice Cube stars as a Chicagoan who reluctantly took over his father’s venerable barbershop. With his wife pregnant, he’s staring at a lifetime of cutting heads to pay the bills. In response, he’s been wasting money on get-rich-quick schemes and glamorous pipe dreams, such as the expensive recording studio he’s set up at home. Now, the taxman is after him, and he is thinking of selling the shop to the local loan shark.

During one long, possibly final, day at the barbershop, he learns just how important his small business is to the people around him, and to his responsibilities as a husband and new father.

If you are having trouble telling your frozen gangsta rappers apart, Ice Cube was a member of N.W.A. and wrote “F— tha Police.” He appeared in “Boyz n the Hood” and “Three Kings.” In indistinct contrast, Ice-T wrote “Cop

Killer” and appeared in “New Jack City.” Ice Cube is the pudgy one, Ice-T the light, ugly one.

(The one white barber in the shop—performed nicely by Troy Garity, the son of Jane Fonda and Tom Hayden—is a dimwitted but sincere Jewish wigger who dresses like Eminem. His character is named “Isaac Rosenberg,” which I guess would make him “Ice Berg.”)

A lot of white reviewers seem disconcerted by seeing the legendary Mr. Cube, whose “Straight Outta Compton” album was the soundtrack for the 1992 L.A. riots, play, with understated conviction, a character roughly modeled on Jimmy Stewart’s in “It’s a Wonderful Life.” At least since Norman Mailer’s hey-day in the 1950s, white culturati bored with bourgeois self-discipline have proven a sizable market for black entertainers acting out their fantasies of rebellion against society.

But, the times they are a-changin’. Among blacks, crime and crack use are way down since 1992. A steady black audience has emerged for all-black movies endorsing family values.

These days, integrated dramas intended for mostly white audiences, such as the Robert De Niro-Cuba Gooding Jr. Navy film “Men of Honor” (the last movie by producers of “Barbershop”), tend to be about white racism. In contrast, all-black movies for black audiences, such as same team’s 1997 hit “Soul Food,” tend to be about African-Americans getting their acts together morally.

While Ice Cube quietly struggles with his choice, an energetic cast gets a lot of laughs as the other six barbers.

Comedian Cedric the Entertainer steals the movie as the crypto-retired eldest barber, a colleague of Ice Cube’s late father. Cedric comes to the shop

every day, but hasn’t had a customer in years, perhaps because his own personal hairstyle, an enormous Afro with a lopsided part, hasn’t been in fashion since Frederick Douglass was advising Abe Lincoln.

He doesn’t mind, though, because the shop gives him a forum for his challenging views: “I wouldn’t be saying this if there were white folks around, but there are three things blacks got to admit: Rodney King deserved to get his ass beat. O.J. did it. And Rosa Parks wasn’t that special, just tired.” The blacks in the preview audience howled and clapped.

When an argument over slavery reparations breaks out, the sage forcefully, if semi-literately, declares, “Respirations ain’t gonna do nothing except make Cadillac the No. 1 dealership in the country.”

“Barbershops” play a particularly important role for men in the “inner city community” precisely because, as Jamaican-born Harvard sociologist Orlando Patterson has observed, due to low rates of stable employment and marriage, it’s just not all that much of a community. That term reflects aspirations (or, as Cedric’s character might say, “apparitions”) more than current reality.

In the quiet centerpiece of the movie, the old barber offers the young owner his own lesson: “The barbershop is the place where a black man means something—cornerstone of the neighborhood, our country club.” He goes on, “Now, your father—he had integrity, he believed in somethin’. He believed that a little ol’ haircut could change how a man was feelin’ that day.” ■

Rated PG-13 for language, sexual content, and brief drug references.

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BOOKS

[*The Fifty-Year Wound: The True Price of America's Cold War Victory*, Derek Leebaert, Little, Brown and Company, 750 pages]

The Experts' War

By Andrew J. Bacevich

THE PAST HARBORS an abundance of truths. Historians mine the past to unearth truths relevant to their own age, discarding others that have lost their capacity to illuminate or explain. In so doing, historians challenge conventions, discomfit the comfortable, and annoy those who have a vested interest in preserving old verities. This is their essential function. If they fail to perform it, history becomes indistinguishable from antiquarianism.

When it comes to understanding America's role in the world today, the obstacles complicating the search for relevant historical truth are especially formidable. Because the received wisdom about U.S. foreign policy—the triumphal narrative of liberal

internationalism—has lodged itself so deeply in the nation's collective psyche, gatekeepers of respectable opinion tend to view any departure from that narrative as tantamount to civic heresy. And because pursuit of the liberal internationalist project—a preeminent America exercising “global leadership”—suits the interests and ambitions of the interlocking elites that dominate the precincts of power, to question the wisdom of that project is inevitably to elicit harsh denunciation or ridicule from on high.

Yet events since the end of the Cold War, culminating in the catastrophe of September 11 and in the ensuing, amorphous, but expanding “war on terror,” suggest a compelling need to reexamine the events through which the United States emerged as Number One. If, as the nation's leaders warn incessantly, last year's attack on New York and Washington was only the first sip from a cup out of which Americans can expect to drink deeply, then perhaps we ought to consider how we came to grasp this particular chalice in the first place.

It is in this regard that Derek Leebaert's reassessment of the Cold War is an especially timely and welcome contribution. Overly long, at times overwrought, and laced with inconsistencies and quirky judgments, this is by no means a perfect book. But its

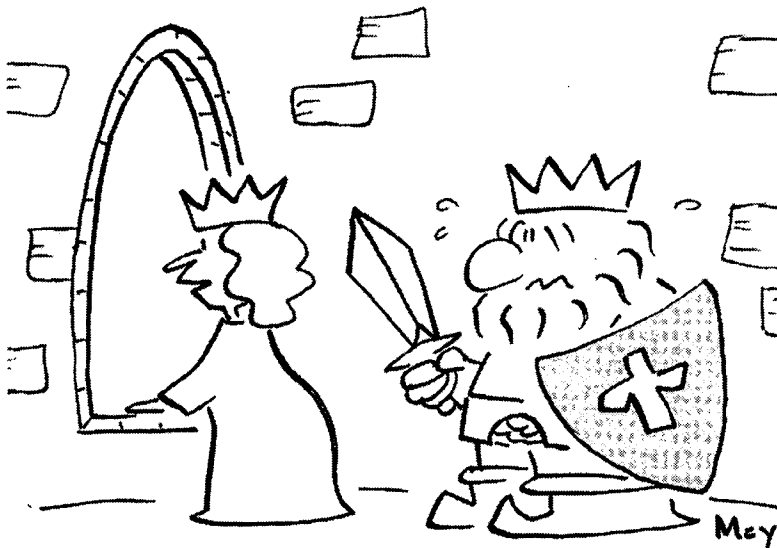
virtues easily outweigh its flaws. *The Fifty-Year Wound* is bold, challenging, and unfailingly provocative. Its publication also stands as a tribute to its author's considerable courage.

Eschewing both the crabbed isolationism of the Old Right and the anti-American inanities of the New Left, Leebaert offers a fresh, warts-and-all perspective on the postwar decades during which the United States secured its present status as the sole superpower. In essence, *The Fifty-Year Wound* subverts the sanitized version of the Cold War that has gained widespread acceptance since 1989. In so doing, it offers readers new truths that bear directly on the situation that the United States faces today.

It is emphatically not Leebaert's purpose either to minimize the evil of totalitarianism or to question the imperative of resisting its spread after World War II. He readily accepts the fact that the Cold War needed to be fought and needed to be won. But how much did victory cost? And to what extent were those expenditures necessary and justified?

To answer those questions, Leebaert undertakes a grand inventory of U.S. actions during the Cold War, cataloguing instances of ignorance, waste, recklessness, opportunism, venality, and a “moral sinuosity” that found American officials employing the most sordid means to achieve ends noble and otherwise. All of these lapses, he finds, flourished on a scale that can only be described as lavish. As a result, individuals and institutions ostensibly committed to defending democracy managed, in the name of “national security,” to do that democracy grave, perhaps irreparable, harm.

Looking beyond specific political, economic, and moral costs, the way that the United States chose to wage the Cold War—above all its penchant for meddling in far-off places—exact a human toll as well. This too Leebaert tallies with painstaking specificity. Measured in American lives lost and American families shattered, that toll was severe. It becomes larger still when



"False alarm—it's just an industrial revolution."



Which Will It Be?

MICHAEL NEW WAS RIGHT ABOUT THE UNITED NATIONS:

**"They have a constitution (charter); they have a head of state;
they have a legislature; they have a world court;
in fact, they have everything they need for a world government
except world taxes (they're working on that)
and a world army—and that's what they want to make me."**

**As we lose our sovereignty by degrees,
important decisions are being made for us by a motley collection
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taking into account the “friends”—Kurds, Montagnards, Hmongs—that the United States casually abandoned to their fate when no longer useful. It becomes positively immense when considering the populations that suffered under the boot of corrupt and oppressive dictators with whom successive administrations—every one declaring America’s fealty to liberal principles—found it expedient to make common cause.

With presidents from Harry Truman onward designating security the overriding national priority, the federal government during the Cold War raised up (or greatly enlarged) a host of agencies. All of them—DOD, NSC, JCS, AEC, NSA, FBI, and so on—justified their existence and their claim to the nation’s resources based on their role in preserving freedom. Yet in short order each could be found avidly pursuing its own parochial agenda even if that meant compromising freedom and disregarding the rule of law. Each seemed to expend as much energy protecting its own prerogatives and budget share from cross-town poachers as it did in attempting to thwart the machinations of the Soviet Union. Each gave birth to its own cadre of inbred, self-perpetuating bureaucrats, who, Leebaert observes,

came to view the Cold War as a trellis on which they could grow careers.

To each of these institutional leviathans Leebaert devotes suitable attention. But he singles out for special consideration the Central Intelligence Agency: the ultimate expression of Cold-War-induced dysfunction and excess. In savage detail he recounts the Agency’s repeated failures of analysis and operational blunders with even ostensible “successes” such as Iran and Guatemala in the 1950s and Afghanistan in the 1980s ultimately bearing bitter fruit. He indicts the Agency for its profound arrogance, its persistent lack of accountability, and its resistance to reform or effective oversight and finds all sadly affirmed by 9/11 and events since.

Why then throughout the Cold War (and again today) did Congress so willingly shovel vast sums of money at the CIA and the various other components of the national security establishment? And why did the electorate so readily acquiesce in such misuse of the nation’s treasure? Leebaert speculates that it was because, beginning in the 1940s, Americans fell into the habit of “hand[ing] responsibility over to the experts of war and science.”

This habit may turn out to be the heaviest, or at least the most enduring, price of all. In Cold War America, the idea took hold that the people were incompetent. Certain topics—nuclear strategy, for example—simply lay beyond their ken. Other sensitive matters, it was said, needed to be kept hidden away from prying eyes, including those of the American public. Such issues were best left to specialists, mostly self-anointed and typically unelected, but all supposedly possessing unique knowledge and insights and motivated by the purest of patriotic sentiments.

Leebaert is at his most effective in exposing such claims as hollow. He shows how the experts—starting with George Kennan, the Cold War’s senior-ranking Wise Man—got too many things dead wrong. Furthermore, he

shows that ostensibly expert judgments all too often derived less from carefully reasoned analysis than from raw prejudice, wild misperception, and groupthink.

Whether these privileged insiders in whom Americans placed their trust were more interested in sound public policy or in greasing the revolving door between the upper echelons of government and the lucrative worlds of consulting, lobbying, and corporate boards is, Leebaert suggests, a tough call. But this much is certain: carried over from the Cold War, reflexive deference to a small national security elite leaves Americans today ill-equipped to think critically about U.S. policy, let alone to have anything meaningful say in its formulation.

The ongoing and apparently open-ended war on global terror makes the point. At the apex of the national security apparatus, a handful of men and women, exuding conviction and zeal, deliberate over when and how to open that war’s next front. Saddam must go, they declare. America must liberate Iraq and bestow upon it the blessings of democracy. On this point the Bush administration’s national security experts speaks with near unanimity. They call urgently for action. Meanwhile, the people, consigned to the role of passive bystanders, observe respectfully and await their instructions.

The Fifty-Year Wound offers fair warning of what awaits the United States as it prepares to plunge more deeply into the morass of the Persian Gulf and the troubled world of Islam. Intervention will have unforeseen and unintended consequences. In fixing some problems, we will create others. We will not extricate ourselves any time soon nor will we emerge with clean hands. And the price entailed will far exceed anything that we can today anticipate.” ■

Andrew J. Bacevich, who teaches at Boston University, is the author of American Empire, to be published this month by Harvard University Press.

General Manager Opening

The American Conservative seeks a publishing professional to oversee all business aspects of this magazine—advertising, circulation, production, and financial; develop/supervise advertising sales; direct printing and distribution, manage office administration and vendors. Qualified candidates must have a bachelor’s degree, and 2+ years hands-on management-level publishing experience. Must be self-motivated and comfortable in a start-up environment.

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The Real Nitty-Gritty

MY WHITE HOUSE MOLE tells me that once the bangbang starts in Baghdad, the first medal will go to Bill Kristol, editor and television personality extraordinaire. The

fujita (translation: martial yelling) *lukatmi* (translation: bragging) award is a civilian one, based on Imperial Japan's highest wartime decoration for sending others to die. The first *fujita-lukatmi* medal was awarded to General Sugamoto Sukiyaki, who ordered hundreds of Kamikazes to fly and die. Sukiyaki never led a mission and was never tried for war crimes. In fact, his name became a household word here in America once a grateful Japanese high command named a dish after him. (They were grateful he did not order them to fly).

Despite the fact that Bill Kristol has been extremely rude about me in one interview after another—I have never met the man because, although I am not at all a snob (being well born), I do nevertheless draw the line somewhere, and he is that somewhere—I fully agree with the award. No one deserves it more. And it is very appropriate for the Bush administration to pin a Japanese special warrior medal on Kristol's Samurai-like chest.

The form of the ceremony is as follows: The Samurai (Kristol) stands still with a *kiku-non-kokoro* look on his face. (Mind like the moon). As the president approaches Kristol, the Samurai lets out a blood-curdling scream, *Kiaaaaaaaaaaaaaa*. The warrior is then pinned, he bows deeply and swaggers Samurai-like out of the Rose Garden and heads for the Likud Party Headquarters in exile, Netanyahu wing, where he is a non-registered agent. The medal is made out of Murdoch gold, in Australia of all places, and the ribbon

is a lemon yellow. Alas, General Sugamoto Sukiyaki (ret.) will not be making the trip because of extreme old age. But he has already sent a message to Kristol. "As long as others die, you will live to a ripe old age. Congratulations." This late report just in: Secretary of State Colin Powell, whom Kristol first touted for president but whose resignation he later demanded for not being warlike enough, will not be attending.

NOW THAT CALIFORNIA might become the first state to force nearly all public schools to drop American Indian team names—Redskins, Chiefs, Apaches all bite the dust—I thought it appropriate to mention that over the pond, in good old Blighty, political correctness is keeping up with the Joneses. A British government minister was recently upbraided for using the phrase "nitty-gritty."

During a speech at a police conference, the police minister of Tony Blair's administration said that it was time to "get down to the nitty-gritty on training officers." The reaction was immediate. The minister was told to apologize and warned that if it happened again he would be sacked on the spot. The head of Scotland Yard's directorate of training, Chris Jefford, told the offender, "As a serving police officer, if I used the term nitty-gritty, I would face instant dismissal. Nitty-gritty is a prohibited term in the modern police service as being a racist term." A number of those attending mentioned the word "slav-

ery" in connection with the offending phrase. Others were not so sure. "If he had passed loud wind in front of the Queen in Westminster Cathedral the reception would not have been half as bad," was the way one old Bobby put it.

Oh well, let's not get down to the nitty-gritty of political correctness. We might be here all week.

TO MORE SERIOUS matters, like the coming war on Iraq. I thought American arrogance reached its summit when the grotesque Madeleine Albright declared that the death of hundreds of thousands of Iraqi children was a price worth paying for U.S. policy against Iraq. This was abysmal cynicism to say the least. But Albright was Albright, and Colin Powell is a noble man, a soldier who knows better.

America, as my colleague Pat Buchanan has been warning for years, is not an imperial nation. It is anti-imperialist and anti-colonialist. Could we bring democracy to post-Saddam Iraq? In my not so humble opinion, chaos yes, democracy never.

All military historians know that the first and fundamental task for governments contemplating war is to be absolutely clear about the political objectives. Today, no such clarity exists. Regime change sounds good as an election slogan, but it can turn into a recipe for disaster quicker than one can say Kristol. Ditto as far as weapons of mass destruction are concerned. It is a mantra, and nothing more. Despite its horrific reputation, mustard gas was shown in World War I to be less lethal than conventional shells and bullets. Saddam's present armory consists of 20 obsolete Scud missiles and a few home-made aircraft drones equipped with

spray tanks. In any case, possession does not necessarily mean use. America, France, Britain, India, Pakistan and Israel all possess nuclear missiles, and not one has so far fired one in anger.

There are, of course, two schools of thought: One is that the Iraqis will dance in the streets if there is a regime change. The other is that an attack will unite them—along with the rest of the Muslim world—against America. I am of the latter opinion. What the administration has to understand is that like most people, Iraqis resent the oppression they will suffer in case of an attack by a foreign power, much more than that practiced by their own. Just as Israeli oppression of the Palestinians unites all Arabs, so will they be further united in their hate of Uncle Sam in case of a war.

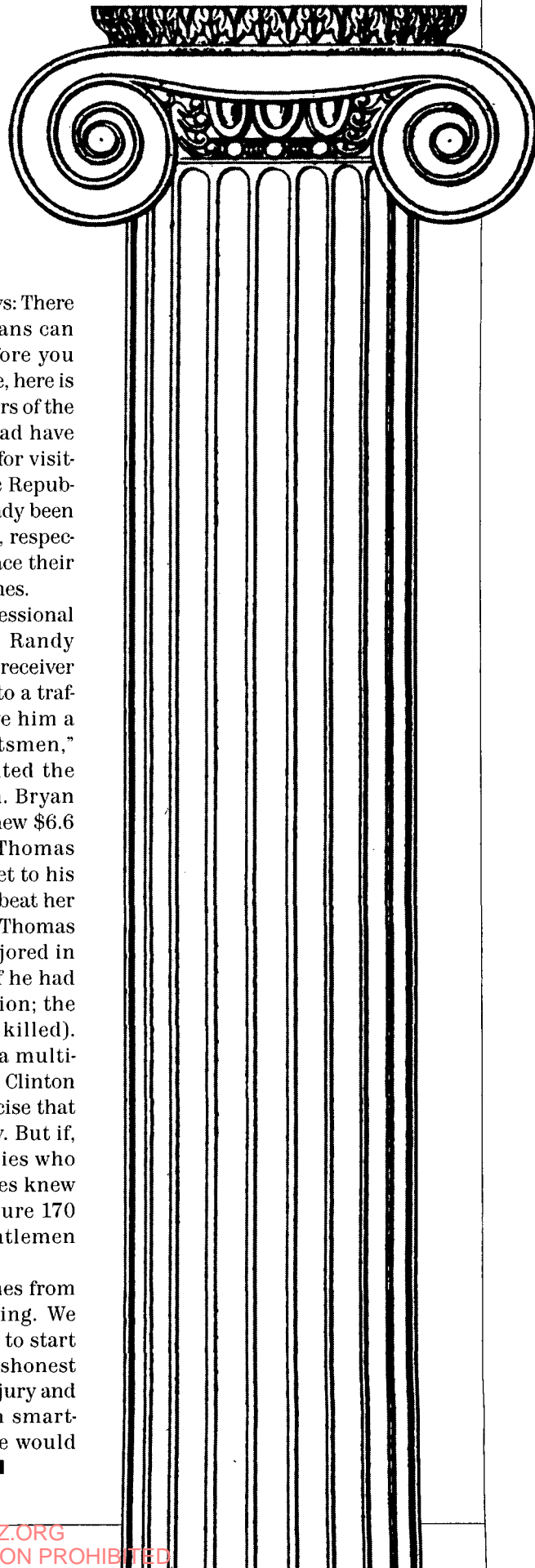
My personal suggestion is an old-fashioned one. Assassinate Saddam and keep quiet about it. (Old Frank Church took care of that option, mind you.) Americans will quote Executive Order 12333, which forbids assassination during peacetime. But this is bollocks. We bomb Iraq daily, so what's a bullet or two up Saddam's you-know-what? If Saddam were killed tomorrow, it would not solve the problem, not with 60 percent of the country being Shias in the south ready to join the mullahs in Iran to topple the Saudis, but it would greatly diminish the perceived threat. How do we kill him? Not so easy. He sleeps in a different place every night and has as many as eight doubles. (In fact, I know very few Iraqis who don't look like Saddam). His ghastly sons might be a way. They do not command the loyalty of their father's elite troops, and they might possibly lead to him. *Cherchez Udai*.

■

AND NOW FOR some good news: There are some things we Americans can learn from ... Iran. And before you start throwing adjectives at me, here is at least one lesson: Eight players of the Iranian national soccer squad have been sentenced to whipping for visiting prostitutes in the Islamic Republic. Two of the eight have already been subjected to 70 of 170 lashes, respectively, while the others still face their sentences along with heavy fines.

I think of some of our professional sports heroes, people like Randy Moss, the Minnesota Vikings receiver who recently drove his car into a traffic warden who dared to give him a ticket. Or those two "sportsmen," father and son, who assaulted the Kansas City first base coach. Bryan Thomas, the New York Jets' new \$6.6 million star, will also do. Thomas allegedly sent an airline ticket to his girlfriend, then proceeded to beat her up when she asked for cash. Thomas is 6'4", 266 pounds and majored in criminal justice. (Imagine if he had majored in physical education; the poor girl might have been killed). Now, as we all know, fining a multimillionaire is like asking Bill Clinton to be truthful: a useless exercise that only wastes time, not money. But if, say, some of those NBA bullies who have beaten up their groupies knew that they would have to endure 170 lashes, they'd turn into gentlemen overnight.

Corporal punishment comes from paradise, goes a Greek saying. We should try it on pro athletes to start with, and then proceed to dishonest CEOs, presidents prone to perjury and obstruction of justice, even smart-aleck TV pundits. The place would become paradise overnight. ■



Can American Soldiers Depend on Foreign Factories?

America relies on superior technology and a strong defense industrial base to field military forces that can win wars and protect lives.

But can America remain strong if its military forces become dependent on foreign sources for key weapon parts and essential war goods?

The problem, unfortunately, is not theoretical.

Dozens of technologies vital to existing U.S. weapons are only available from foreign sources, including electronics, displays, and production equipment, among others.

During times of crisis, even America's allies can be unreliable sources.

The reasons are limitless – enemy action, political intimidation, commercial constraints, and national policies to keep the best equipment and technology for their own military are the most obvious.

During the 1980s, for example, the

Japanese Diet blocked the timely shipment of ceramics essential to the manufacture of U.S. cruise missiles. And earlier this year, the Dutch Government refused to cooperate with America's efforts to build diesel submarines for Taiwan.

Now, the Pentagon is about to embark on a major updating of U.S. forces, based on "next generation" technology and manufacturing processes. This equipment will be faster, lighter, more precise, and harder hitting.

But can we risk designing foreign dependency into these new systems? Or should we ensure that American troops always have

a reliable supply of the best technology and equipment, flowing directly into their hands from our own "arsenal of democracy"?

We think that maintaining a strong U.S. manufacturing base matters.

What do you think?

***For want of a nail,
the shoe was lost;
For want of the shoe,
the horse was lost;
For want of the horse,
the rider was lost;
For want of the rider,
the battle was lost;
For want of the battle,
the kingdom was lost;
And all for the want
of a horseshoe nail.***

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